



# AgTalk

## Inside this issue:

<i>Agriculture, Food and Rural Development</i>	1
<i>Agriculture Financial Services Corporation</i>	4
<i>Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative</i>	5
<i>Alberta Pulse Growers Commission</i>	6
<i>"Of Interest"</i>	6
<i>Announcements</i>	7

## Newsletter from the Leduc District Office

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development  
Agriculture Financial Services Corporation  
Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative  
Alberta Pulse Growers Commission

4301 - 50 Street  
Leduc, AB T9E 7H3

Serving the Counties of Leduc, Strathcona, Wetaskiwin,  
the M.D. of Brazeau and Beyond!

Find out how we can help you, your business and your organization!

**Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development**  
**Phone: 986-8985 (Toll Free 310-0000) Fax: 986-1085**

Leanne Chubocha...Client Service Representative  
Cindy Bishop.....Rural Development Specialist-Organizations  
George Rock.....Farm Management Specialist  
Roger Andreiuk.....Crop Specialist – Cereal & Oilseeds



## *I'm Ba-a-ck... I'm Here!*

By Roger Andreiuk, Cereal & Oilseed Specialist

I'M BA-A-CK! So goes a famous line from many suspense thriller movies. However, I like to think the words, "I'M HERE!" are more fondly remembered from the old Bugs Bunny shows featuring the rooster Foghorn Leghorn. When he arrives on a scene he says "I'm here, I'm here – Let the bells ring out and the banners fly – I'm here!"

Now I don't expect bells and banners but I am very happy to be back at my job as Cereal and Oilseed Spec-

ialist in Leduc and look forward to renewing old acquaintances. I have spent the last year working with Phil Thomas, our Provincial Oilseed Specialist based out of Lacombe, and thoroughly enjoyed that experience. This work opportunity was a great way to learn more about the canola industry in Canada and abroad. It also served as an exchange of expertise among divisions of Alberta Agriculture and will result in improved service to the agriculture industry.

This is probably one of the earliest harvests on record so by the time your read this the combine will likely be put away for the winter. Hopefully, you'll have a bit of a break before winter sets in and can peruse this newsletter at your leisure.

I look forward to working with you – whether it's planning your next year's crops, working on fertilizer recommendations or seeing you at this winter's upcoming meetings!

Cheers!





## Capitalize on Creativity

By Cindy Bishop, Rural Development Specialist – Organizations



*"Are you trying to solve today's problems with yesterday's solutions?"*

Are the people in your work group or volunteer organization getting a little stale? Is the "same old same old" routine zapping your energy? Are you trying to solve today's problems with yesterday's solutions?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, your group may be in need of a *creativity fix*! More to the point, you need to find a way to unleash your individual and collective (group) creativity. There are real benefits to be gained.

Creativity increases initiative and leadership ability. It's a great asset for turning problems into opportunities. It fosters innovation which we badly need in our rapidly changing world. Creativity adds interest to our life and work. It injects fun into otherwise mundane activities.

Creativity is the ability to rearrange what we already know into something new and different. The potential to be creative rests in each and everyone of us. If your creativity has been dormant for awhile, give yourself time to stir up and practice creative thinking. The great thing about creativity is that it tends to "snowball". Creative ideas build on each other.

Think about how you can encourage creative "out of the box" thinking in your group. Be careful not to create creative roadblocks. Here are some sure-fire ways to kill creativity in your organization or business, that you'll want to avoid:

- Say "no" a lot.
- Whatever you do, do not get caught doing something silly.
- Make sure that everyone looks at everything from your point of view.
- Take the first and easiest solution to every problem.

***"Working With You to Plan, Lead, Achieve"*** is the slogan we Rural Development Specialists-Organizations use to describe our services. It is also the name of our new promotional brochure for members or leaders of agricultural/rural groups. Inside you'll find a complete list of services, information on how we can work with you, testimonials, and contact numbers for specialists across the province. Copies will be available in late September. Call and ask for your brochure today!

- Make sure nobody you work or play with has any fun.
- Keep your office (board or meeting room), a serious, business-like place.

## Assessing the Feasibility of Your New Agriculture Venture

By Janice McGregor, Rural Development Specialist – Business (Morinville)

*"A feasibility analysis will help you assess if the financial returns for the new venture will justify the investment"*

Assessing the feasibility of a business opportunity is one management skill that you can use to determine what you want to do before making a significant financial investment. The feasibility

process should be undertaken whenever your business is considering a change which involves a significant investment decision or will affect either the production costs or the returns.

You first need to assess what physical resources you now own: land and soil type, buildings, machinery & equipment, zoning, water & sewage, gas & electricity,

*(Continued on page 3)*



(Continued from page 2)

road & highway access, primary products which could be further processed and packaged. Are there under-utilized facilities or equipment that could be put to use in a new enterprise?

You also need to look at the skills and abilities of all the people involved in your enterprise - do you have the expertise in production and marketing? Be prepared to spend a lot of time on marketing since there is not a large established market for many exotic crops, livestock and other agricultural products.

Collecting this type of information will help you to determine if there are any combi-

nation of skills, markets or under-utilized resources that could create a new business opportunity. Once you have narrowed down the field of potential businesses and selected one alternative, the next step is conducting a feasibility analysis on that business idea. A feasibility analysis will help you assess if the financial returns for the new venture will justify the investment needed.

If you are considering a new venture, you may wish to check out some of the **AG VENTURE** "Industry at a glance" profiles available: Herb/Spice, Commercial Ostrich, Fresh Water Aquaculture, Greenhouse Bedding Plant Production and Marketing, Commercial Saska-

toon, Fresh Vegetable Market Gardening, Commercial Cattle Feeding and more. These profiles cover industry highlights, production, financial, marketing and regulatory basics. You can also check out the **Ag Venture Resource library** and borrow videos, books, manuals and kits on a wide variety of new venture opportunities.

To discuss your new venture opportunity or for assistance on food processing - packaging, labeling, marketing, product development etc., please call Janice McGregor, Rural Development Specialist - Business, Morinville at 939-4351 (toll-free through the RITE system at 310-0000).

## Safe Harvest

By George Rock, Farm Management Specialist

*"Talk in the field would be how well the crop was doing, how dry it was, how busy the truck driver(s) were, how the combine(s) were running."*

Harvest time is very weather sensitive. Indeed, growing up as a small boy in the 1950's in central Alberta it seemed there were two seasons. The grain is *dry!* Or it's still *tough!* When it was dry then you 'go' until it's 'tough'. When you can 'go' everything needs fuel. The combines and trucks needed gasoline (no diesel combines yet). The harvest crew needed food.

I remember 'tea-time' best. My sister and I would get home from a one-room country school about 4 pm. If we were lucky, we got to go to the field with tea. The truck driver would stop at the

house, pick up the boxes, and two 'harvest helpers' squeezed into the cab of a 1951 one-ton Chevrolet. Mum would have the lunch ready to go, usually a wooden B.C. apple box loaded with sandwiches, cake, fruit and glass quart 'sealers' of tea. There would be three, one black, one with sugar, one with cream and sugar. They would be wrapped with old newspapers, no thermos bottles on our farm yet as we were told they would always break. (I learned later that my dad didn't like the taste of tea from a thermos!) Sometimes you'd get to help make tea

on a Saturday. You had to boil copious quantities of water, make the tea in several pots, then pour it in the sealer down a silver spoon so the 'sealer' wouldn't crack. I'm not sure of the logic, but we poured a lot of hot tea in jars that way and we didn't break any 'sealers'.

Talk in the field would be how well the crop was doing, how dry it was, how busy the truck driver(s) were, how the combine(s) were running. Everyone would eat rapidly, the tea left would usually go with someone to be drank cold later on.

(Continued on page 4)







*(Continued from page 3)*

If there was a sandwich or piece of cake left someone would be encouraged to eat it. "If you don't clean it up, we won't get as much tomorrow!"

Then it was time to gas up the Super 27 Massey-Harris as it only had five hours of fuel in hard threshing. And we would get to go home all excited to be part of 'bringing-in-sheaves'. The truck driver would be told, 'get the box back to the house or there won't be any

tea tomorrow'. Looking back, I know we were more of a nuisance than a help but everyone was able to handle small kids questions with good humour.

Now the combines are much larger, the trucks are huge, the bins and augers are all made on a grand scale. Hard work is lessened but long hours are the norm. The cabs keep you out of the dust and keep you warm on those cool October nights. Your en-

couraged to stay even longer. Be careful, judgment gets clouded when you're tired. Try to keep your stress level under control. Difficult I know when a chain breaks (again) and makes a \$250,000 combine into a paperweight. Remember, machines can keep going, but people need a rest sometimes. Look after yourselves, and I hope you had a *safe harvest*!

#### **Agriculture Financial Services Corporation**

**Insurance: 986-4088**

**Lending: 986-0999**

**Fax: 986-1085**

Insurance Division:..... Val Hensch  
Carol Ohrn  
Karen Brenneis

Lending Division:..... Garry Poffenroth



Agriculture  
Financial Services  
Corporation

## *Welcome!*

The Leduc District Office staff welcomes Garry Poffenroth as the AFSC loans officer replacing Bill Tchir

who has transferred to an opening at the Westlock office. Garry has been with the corporation for 14

years working out of the Evansburg office. Please feel free to give Garry a call at 986-0999.

## *Crop Update*



Early June cut hay crops were very poor and farmers were not able to get them baled due to the excessive moisture we received. Second cut crops look much better. With the ideal weather conditions, harvest is almost completed.

Bushel weight may be a concern this year. The area had a hailstorm on August 17th resulting in approximately 45 claims. Damage varied from 10% to 85%. Canola in the swath received the most damage.

Just a reminder for those who have All-Risk Crop Insurance, to report your harvested production as soon as possible.

Good luck with harvest!



**Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative**  
**Phone: 980-4898 Cell: 940-8625 Fax: 986-1085**

## *Direct Seeding – Why might you consider it on your farm?*

By Mark Olson, Agronomist

The first thing I hear from most farmers when I tell them I'm with Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative is, "oh, you're with those guys that are trying to conserve moisture and that's for southern Alberta farmers in those dry areas". And that's partially correct. As you and I know in this area, the lack of moisture is generally not the problem, rather the reverse is true in 9 out of 10 years. Yet a number of farmers in the area have switched to reduced tillage or direct seeding for other reasons.

The major reason is, of course, **economics**. In years like this one, where there is downward pressure on cereal, oilseed and pulse prices, everyone looks at how to trim costs. Fewer passes or seeding directly into stubble means savings on time, labor, machinery repairs and depreciation.

Another reason is **economics of scale** or farm size. While I'm not convinced bigger is always better, farm size has increased over the years. Those farmers that have switched to direct seeding, in a number of instances, have doubled their annually cropped acres since they're only going over the

land once. As one farmer told me, "if I'm netting \$50/acre on 1000 acres, and I'm able to do the same on 2000 acres that takes some of debt pressures we're facing with rising inputs, lower prices and purchasing new technologies." On the down side to this is the ever increasing competition for crop land. In many communities the quest for more land has pitted neighbor against neighbor.

**Moisture conservation** as a reason to switch to direct seeding, as mentioned earlier, plays a smaller role in north central Alberta since it seems that precipitation is usually not limiting. However, dry starts to the spring have occurred. While it's great to get the crop in early in a year like this past one - sitting, waiting and praying for it to rain to get the crop germinated is something that has always made a lot of farmers nervous. In areas where there isn't a lot of growing days for the high yielding varieties, having the seed sit in the ground for two weeks always make one uneasy. A lot of times, one week makes a large difference in terms of quality (frost or extended rainy periods are considerations) or plain just getting the crop off before the snow that

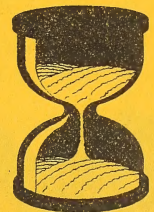
year.

Last but not least is the **soil conservation** aspect of keeping the soil intact so future generations have something productive to farm. There are research studies that suggest organic matter under reduced tillage or direct seeding is at the very least being maintained or even increased over time. Soil porosity (pores or spaces in the soil) has also been measured and increases under direct seeding systems. This is because we're not pulverizing the soil through tillage into fine talcum powder. Increased porosity, means better water holding capacity soil as well as aeration or oxygenation of the soil for plant growth. So there are a lot of factors involved.

These are just a few of the reasons farmers are examining and switching to direct seeding. However, I caution you - flexibility and common sense, as in most things in farming, have to be maintained. The move to direct seeding should be well thought out in advance since there are many critical steps in the system. Should you want to debate or discuss the merits or pitfalls of reduced tillage or direct seeding please give me call.



*"Fewer passes or seeding directly into stubble means savings on time, labor, machinery repairs and depreciation."*



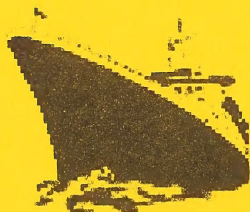
*"the soil conservation aspect of keeping the soil intact so future generations have something productive to farm"*



**Alberta Pulse Growers Commission****Phone/Fax: 986-9398**

Janette McDonald.....General Manager

Marla Schumacher.....Secretary/Treasurer

*New Pulse Growers Win a Caribbean Cruise*

Ron and Carol Kozial of Calmar are growing peas for the first time in 1998. The crop looks great and to top it off, they have won the 1998 Pulse Field Trial Challenge Grand Prize – a Caribbean Cruise for two!

“We’re very pleased with our pea crop, and winning this trip makes that pea field look even better!” says Kozial.

“The Alberta Pulse Growers are pleased to present this trip to the Kozials” says APGC Manager, Janette McDonald. “We have been concentrating on getting the message out to new growers about the benefits of pulse crops in rota-

tions. New growers are planting pulse crops not only to diversify marketing options, but to improve the long term health of their farm’s soil.”

This summer, the Alberta Pulse Growers Commission coordinated an exciting initiative for first time pulse growers. The Pulse Challenge offered production information and input discounts for 40 acres of pulse crops. Co-operators on this initiative were independent Seed Suppliers, MBR, Cyanamid, Agriculture and Food Council, Gustafson, Bayer, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Limagrain.

McDonald claims, “Pulse acreage is up across the province and there were about 510,000 acres of peas planted this spring. That’s up 33% from 1997. We see significant new acreage in the south and all along the eastern half of Alberta. Farmers in these areas have heard that peas perform very well under dry conditions.”

“We expect a good crop and we are working on expanding the domestic and export markets to handle the product”, says McDonald. “We know that’s the way to keep new growers, like the Kozials, growing pulse crops. That, and a Caribbean Cruise!”

*Of Special Interest...**“Putting the Harvest Back in Thanksgiving”*

In 1998, *Agriculture and Food Week* will be celebrated during Thanksgiving Week from October 12th to 16th.

Growing Alberta\* sees the opportunity to re-position *Agriculture and Food Week* as a platform to begin:

- consolidating a number of industry activities;
- celebrating achievement within the industry;
- sharing information externally with the urban public.

Market research studies conducted in 1991, 1994, and 1997 for Growing Alberta revealed that urban Albertans:

- Have consistent concerns about the environmental impact of the agriculture and food industry; especially chemical and antibiotic uses
- Lack appreciation for size and scope of the food processing sector;
- See agriculture and food as

a “taking” industry; (government subsidized)

- Have a limited understanding of the relevance of the industry in their personal lives.

\*Growing Alberta is a public information program to better inform Albertans about the agriculture and food industry’s importance to Alberta’s economy, quality of life and especially environmental stewardship.





## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### WELCOME!

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development would like to welcome Bob Buchanan to the Leduc District office.

Bob is an Agricultural Water Specialist and will be joining our office October 1st, 1998.

Effective September 15, 1998, Bill Grabowsky joined Alberta Agriculture as Beef Specialist based out of Wetaskiwin District Office. Be sure to call Bill with any of your beef related inquiries at 361-1240.

### PEOPLE, PASTURES & PROFIT

Alberta Forage Council, in conjunction with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, is sponsoring the second Western Canadian Grazing Conference, to be held at the Mayfield Inn in Edmonton, December 2 & 3, 1998.

This two-day conference is designed for producers (both new and experienced) who want to improve their pasture production knowledge and techniques. Conference chairman, Greg Griffin, states that the aim of the conference is to help farmers "get more pounds and profit from their pastures!"

Complete registration fees for the two-day event are only \$100. For more information, or to register for the conference, contact Lorene Cunningham at the Alberta Forage Council office; phone (403)443-7544, e-mail [abforage@telusplanet.net](mailto:abforage@telusplanet.net), or fax (403)443-7530.

### Alberta Canola Producers Commission

Annual Regional Meeting  
&  
Canola Production Information Seminar

November 6, 1998  
9:30am – 3:30pm  
Pioneer 73 Club  
Devon, AB

Pre-register by calling Alberta Agriculture  
@ 986-8985

### OPEN HOUSE

Cryptosporidium and Giardia  
Research In the North Saskatchewan River Basin

*Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia* are very small parasites that can infect and reproduce in the digestive tract of animals, including humans. There will be an open house for people wanting to find out more about this.

**When:** November 4, 1998

**Time:** 1:00pm – 4:00pm

**Where:** Sunnybrook Hall

For more information, contact Ben Froebel at 674-8305, Sandra Cook at 538-3397 or your local district office.

### Water Wells... that last for generations

This manual will provide information which will assist agricultural producers in making wise decisions in regards to planning new wells or troubleshooting problems with older wells.

This information series includes: the above manual and 3 videos at no charge.

For more information, please contact Leanne at 986-8985.

### Feed Barley Quality Competition

The Alberta Barley Association is running a feed barley quality competition this year.

If you are interested, don't delay.  
Registration deadline – September 30  
Contact your local district office for more details!

In our Spring/Summer 1998 Newsletter, Vol 1 No 2 page 7, Guide to Custom Rates:

The figures in the column titled "Blend 2/3 Tenant" are incorrect. The correct numbers are: A. Total Revenue \$119.13, B. Total Direct Expense \$79.75, C. Return Over Direct Expense \$39.38, D. Depreciation \$20.00 and E. Return to Investment and Management \$19.38. We regret any inconvenience that may have been caused by this error.

National Library of Canada  
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada



3 3286 51598 0668